



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

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March 12, 2009

### IDENTITY THIEF SOUGHT

PHILADELPHIA - United States Attorney Laurie Magid today announced the filing of an indictment <sup>1</sup> against Charles McLaurin charging him with failure to appear for sentencing.

#### BACKGROUND:

McLaurin appeared in federal court on March 5, 2009, for sentencing on two separate identity theft and credit card fraud schemes in which he victimized, among others, retired New Jersey school teachers, and caused a total of approximately \$101,000 in losses. During a recess in the proceeding and before the judge could render his sentence, McLaurin, who was not under federal custody, left the courtroom. He decided not to return from the recess. McLaurin was declared a fugitive and a bench warrant was issued for his arrest that night.

McLaurin was indicted for the first scheme in August 2006 and for a separate scheme in August 2007. The cases were consolidated and he pleaded guilty to all charges on December 10, 2008, including conspiracy, six counts of access device fraud, three counts of identity theft, and three counts of aggravated identity theft. In one scheme, McLaurin led a group of identity thieves who used personal information stolen from employees of the Camden City (NJ) School District to apply for credit cards. Some of those victims were retired from teaching. None of the victims learned about the scheme until their credit card companies contacted them, by which time, their FICO scores and credit histories had suffered critical damage. Total losses in the first scheme amounted to approximately \$71,000. In the later scheme, McLaurin stole the personal information of a tenant in a building where McLaurin sometimes stayed. He opened credit card accounts and auto loans in the victim's name and caused losses of approximately \$30,000.

McLaurin is facing up to ten years in prison and possible restitution for the conviction on which he was being sentenced. If convicted of the new charge of failure to appear, McLaurin faces a maximum possible sentence of five years imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000, a \$100 special assessment and three years of supervised release.

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<sup>1</sup> An Indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

McLaurin's mother, Gwenda Brown, was indicted for the 2006 scheme and is also a fugitive. Anyone with information on McLaurin's whereabouts is asked to call the United States Marshals Service at 215-597-0374.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

| NAME             | ADDRESS          | AGE OR YEAR OF BIRTH |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Charles McLaurin | Philadelphia, PA | 30                   |

The original case was investigated by the United States Postal Inspection Service and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Floyd J. Miller.

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